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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/982,928	10/22/2001	Steven M. Knowles	10765-015001	8524

7590 11/03/2004
STEPTOE & JOHNSON LLP
1330 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20036

EXAMINER

FLANDRO, RYAN M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3679

DATE MAILED: 11/03/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/982,928

Applicant(s)

KNOWLES, STEVEN M.

Examiner

Ryan M Flandro

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— The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address —

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 August 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,7-10,12 and 41-43 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,7-10, 12 and 41-43 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 12 December 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claim Objections

2. In light of Applicant's amendments to the claims, the objections set forth in the previous Office action (mailed 5/10/04) have been overcome. The objections are hereby withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

- DPS
3. Claims 1, 7-10, 12 and 41-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Coutu (US 1,914,736) in view of Morrison (US 1,532,195). The rejections set forth in the previous Office action (mailed 5/10/04) are incorporated herein by reference.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments (at pages 5-6 of the response filed 8/6/2004) with regard to the rejection of claims 1, 7-10, 12 and 41-43 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, the Examiner notes that one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the **rejections are based on combinations of references**. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986). In this case, Coutu discloses only that the retaining ring 8 compresses the seal 5,11 by threadedly attaching to an outer surface of the socket 1. The Examiner agrees with Applicant's argument

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that Coutu, by itself, does not disclose or teach the retaining ring 8 threadably connecting to a surface of the socket *adjacent to the central fluid conductor* (i.e., on an inner surface of the socket). In view of the teachings of Morrison set forth in the previous rejection, however, one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize the obvious equivalence of connecting the retaining ring on the outer or inner surfaces of the socket.

Furthermore, Applicant suggests that Coutu does not describe or teach a central fluid conductor that couples a first ball and a second ball. On the contrary, and as pointed out in the previous Office action, Coutu shows and discloses ball 13a having a threaded female connection portion 14a (see e.g. figure 2) and ball 13 having a threaded male connection portion 14 (see e.g. figure 3). Therefore, the structure taught by Coutu allows connection between balls 13 and 13a via connecting portions 14, 14a to create a “central fluid conductor that couples a first ball and a second ball” as recited in the claims.

The references, when considered together, teach each and every limitation set forth in the rejected claims. Accordingly, the rejection is maintained.

Conclusion

5. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

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will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ryan M Flandro whose telephone number is (703) 305-6952. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30am - 5:30pm Mon-Fri.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel J. Stodola can be reached on (703) 308-2686. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

RMF

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October 28, 2004

Daniel P Stodola

DANIEL P. STODOLA
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600